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ABSTRACT

Facilitating consensual labor-management decision making may require interventions during, after, and before meetings. These interventions--including persuasion and mediation--may affect both the internal and the external processes of decision making. Communicative actions may help both the internal and the external decision making processes of a committee. To help the internal process, the facilitator should avoid multiple, simultaneous conversations, clarify frames of references, rephrase decision proposals and test for consensus, and clarify the positions of each party in dispute. The external process of decision making may be facilitated by adhering to the following directives: (1) identify the interests of different stakeholders, (2) explore differences and similarities among these interests, and (3) seek an overarching interest that harmonizes these multiple interests. (Appended are some descriptive frameworks and models for examining the process of facilitating.) (HOD)

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Facilitating Consensual Labor-Management Decision Making

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Abstract

Facilitating consensual labor-management decision making may require interventions during, after, and before meetings. These interventions--including persuasion and mediation--may affect both the internal and external processes of decision making. Depending upon the exigency preventing a consensus, facilitators may use either communicative (dialogical) or strategic (negotiative) actions to help a committee reach agreement.

FACILITATING CONSENSUAL LABOR-MANAGEMENT DECISION MAKING

Cooperative labor-management programs, including Quality of Work Life (QWL) programs, attempt to institutionalize participative and consensual decision making. Two recent works (Herrick, 1983; Zager & Rosow, 1982) have addressed many of the structural requirements for implementing such programs. Successful QWL and other labor-management programs often rely on creating a representational program structure that (1) parallels the hierarchial structure of the parent organization but (2) inverts the traditional locus of control. Figure 1 displays an idealized program structure; although the "worksite committees" constitute the lowest level of the structure, they make the majority of the decisions about the program.

--Insert Figure 1 about here--

Although structurally-oriented research provides well-grounded directives for labor-management program implementation, process-oriented research about these programs' decision making is relatively new and fragmentary (Savage, 1984a, 1984b). Nonetheless, this process-oriented research does suggest that cooperative programs need consensual committee decision making in order to effect changes in organizational policies and procedures. Hence, if a worksite committee can stand united behind its decisions, it will be able to avoid internal "sabotage" of its proposals, and it will continue to serve as an arena for "negotiating" residual labor-management issues. Thus for most labor-management committees, effective decisions would seem to require group consensus.

Guidelines formulated specifically for facilitating consensual labor-management decision making are hard to come by, perhaps, because most of the research on consensual decision making (Destephen, 1983;

Hill, 1976; Knutson, 1972; Knutson & Holdridge, 1975; Knutson & Kowitz, 1977) has relied on self-report measures of consensus gathered after a group has reached a decision. Moreover, even dynamic measures of consensus (Spillman, Bezdek, & Spillman, 1979) rely on self-report instruments administered while a group is making a decision. Hence, this line of research treats consensus as an important outcome of group discussion, but it does not directly examine how the process of discussion affects consensus (Savage, 1985a). However, by applying a descriptive framework and a critical communication theory perspective to selected cases of labor-management decision making, a set of directives for facilitating consensual labor-management decision making can be derived and explicated.

A Descriptive Framework for Examining the Process of Facilitating

A facilitator can affect the orientation of a committee (i.e., its internal process) and/or the group's relationship to organizational subsystems and systems (i.e., its external process). Most of the process-oriented research on decision making focuses directly upon a group's internal process of communication (e.g., Fisher, 1970; see also Cragan & Wright, 1980), ignoring how external processes and even "indirect" internal processes may affect decision making. Hence, examining not only the internal processes but also the external processes provides a simple--yet overlooked--way to view facilitation within labor-management programs. Table 1 illustrates a descriptive framework for examining the process of facilitating labor-management decision making.

--Insert Table 1 about here--

Facilitating internal processes includes two forms of intervention: (1) "direct" intervention during meetings and (2) "indirect" interven-

tion after and/or before meetings. On one hand, direct interventions during meetings, by their very nature, affect group communication. Facilitators assess group interaction and, through their remarks, attempt either to guide and/or mediate the group's decision making. On the other hand, indirect interventions after and/or before meetings count as attempts to influence individuals or coalitions of individuals, thus indirectly affecting the group's decision making. Indirect internal facilitation may take many forms, from counseling individuals to mediating disputes between conflicting coalitions within a committee.

External process facilitation also encompasses two types of intervention: (1) "inward" interventions affecting committee/constituent interaction and (2) "outward" interventions affecting committee/program/organization interaction. "Inward" interventions may range from suggesting how a committee gather information from its constituents to directly mediating a committee's feedback sessions with its constituents. In other words, this form of intervention affects both the downward flow of communication from the committee and the upward flow of communication to the committee. "Outward" interventions affect both the upward and/or lateral flow of communication from the committee and the downward and/or lateral flow of communication to the committee. For example, the facilitator may act as a liaison--linking committee "A" to committee "B" in order to broaden the committee "A's" information base on a specific issue. Or the facilitator may help a committee negotiate the implementation of a new work schedule with the host organization, thus actively affecting the committee's (and the organization's) decision making.

A Theoretical Perspective for Understanding the Process of Facilitating

The descriptive framework for examining facilitating may be supplemented with a critical communication theory. Habermas' theory of communicative action (1979, 1982, 1984) assumes that decision making may be understood as both dialogue and negotiation, further differentiating the modes of communication that facilitators use for each type of intervention. Moreover, his theory assumes that dialogue and negotiation may be systematically distorted, providing facilitators with a critical reason for intervention. Figure 2 illustrates the typology of social actions encompassed by Habermas' theory (1979, p. 209; 1984, p. 333).

--Insert Figure 2 about here--

Habermas' theory differentiates between communicative (dialogic) and strategic (negotiative) conversations. He explains this difference in the following passage.

> Communication and purposive activity are two equally fundamental elements of social interactions. These interactions fall into two classes, depending on the mechanism for co-ordinating action: communicative action and strategic action. In the one case co-ordination takes place by way of building consensus, in the other case by way of complementing interest situations. In the former case communication in language has to serve as the medium for co-ordinating action; in the latter it can do so. To the extent that strategic interactions are linguistically mediated, language serves as a means of influencing. With reference to sanctions, ego brings alter to decisions from which ego expects consequences favourable to the attainment of its own ends. In doing so, ego does not--as it does in communicative action--first have to get involved in the consensus-forming function of language. If, on the other hand, ego and alter harmonise their plans of action with one another, that is, if they pursue their individual ends only under the condition of a communicatively produced consensus regarding the given situation, they have to make use of language in a manner orientated to reaching understanding. (Habermas, 1982, p. 237)

The distinction between the use of language for communicative and strategic action has a number of implications. First, as everyone even-

tually learns to his or her chagrin, language may be used to deceive another person. In such cases, one person acts as if he or she wishes to harmonise plans with another, hiding his or her true purpose until a particular, strategic end is gained (i.e., manipulation). Second, because language is a medium for both strategic and communicative action, committee members may unconsciously deceive themselves that they have reached a consensus--only later to learn that they have been complementing their interests rather than harmonising their plans of action. Such systematically distorted communication can lead to a great deal of acrimony as each coalition within the committee accuses the other of lying.

Indeed, because language is a medium for both communicative and strategic action, the question arises of how one can determine if an agreement is based on unconscious deception or conscious assent. Habermas (1970, 1971, 1979) employs a negative dialectic to discover a critical standpoint from which to distinguish a valid consensus from a pseudo consensus. Thus, he argues, the very fact that people (1) experience social actions in which interactants misrepresent reality, act inappropriately or unjustly toward one another, deliberately lie about their intentions, or remain incomprehensible and (2) recognize the invalidity of these actions indicates that all communication is oriented toward (anticipates) an ideal speech situation. This ideal speech situation complements the counterfactual, pragmatic experience of social action by providing it with a universal structure of four validity (truth) claims: intelligibility, propositional truth, appropriateness, and sincerity. When each type of claim to truth is mutually upheld during a dialogue, the participants will acheive a mutual understanding, a consensus.

The upholding or redeeming of validity claims is crucial to the pro-

cess of dialogue. Habermas' (1979) theory emphasizes the double structure (propositional content and illocutionary force) of speech which provides communicators with the possibility of thematizing, bracketing, and discursively redeeming truth claims. According to Habermas, communicators may thematize three truth claims: (1) constative speech acts raise the claim of propositional truth, (2) regulative speech acts evoke the claim of appropriateness, and (3) avowed speech acts surface the claim of sincerity. Thematizing a truth claim anticipates that it can be fulfilled (redeemed); this implicit promise is the rational basis for illocutionary force. Testing this promise entails bracketing a validity claim and discursively seeking the grounds for the claim. Such discourse (dialectical dialogue) makes the bases for any consensus explicit and counters the "domination" of unfounded opinion.

Sometimes, however, the very grounds for validity are disputed and participants seek to establish norms for such claims as propositional truth or appropriateness. This "action oriented toward reaching an understanding" constitutes the normative background for all consensual action. Only when each participant agrees to certain "rules" about what counts and what does not count as valid can the "game" of dialogue resume.

If participants openly disregard grounds for validity while seeking to influence one another, then they are engaging in strategic actions rather than communicative actions. Such actions are best considered as negotiative behaviors. Indeed, much of the literature on negotiation and bargaining (e.g., Greenhalgh, Neslin, & Gilkey, 1985; Homans, 1974; Komorita & Hamilton, 1984; Neale & Bazerman, 1985; Rubin & Brown, 1975; Young, 1975) examines openly strategic actions and manipulation.

A Communicative and Strategic Action Model of Facilitation

Habermas' theory of communicative action suggests a number of modifications to the descriptive framework for facilitating consensual decision making. Although a facilitator usually acts communicatively during interventions, some exigencies require a facilitator to act strategically in order to effect a consensus decision. Table 2 exemplifies those typical exigencies that necessitate communicative actions and those that demand strategic actions.

--Insert Table 2 about here--

Clearly, the exigencies noted in Table 2 do not exhaust the types of crises that call for a facilitator's intervention, nor do the actions evoked by these exigencies fully describe the intervention processes undertaken by a facilitator. Moreover, the distinction between persuasion and mediation is not clear cut; as Table 3 illustrates, these two intervention modes use many of the same social actions.

--Insert Table 3 about here--

Persuasion and Mediation

At least three approaches try to account for the evident similarity of actions undertaken to persuade and actions used to mediate. One approach distinguishes between the two modes in terms of the intent of the facilitator. If the facilitator intends to advocate a certain outcome, then the mode of choice is persuasion; conversely, if the facilitator intends to have the committee seek an outcome that is mutually acceptable, then the mode of choice is mediation. This approach, however, ignores the dialogical character of some forms of persuasion--the facilitator's rhetoric may be persuasive solely because it clarifies the thinking of the committee (Johannesen, 1971).

A second approach distinguishes between mediation and persuasion by noting the relationships already formed within the committee. On one hand, if a committee has formed two or more coalitions advocating different positions on an issue, then mediation which encompasses the positions of each coalition is the mode of choice for the facilitator. On the other hand, if a committee has not yet formed apparent coalitions, then persuasion--directed at the committee as a whole or at individual members--is the facilitative mode of choice. Even this distinction does not seem completely satisfactory, however, since persuasion may still be brought to bear after coalitions have formed (see Table 2).

A third approach accounts for the differences between mediation and persuasion by noting both the relationships formed within the committee and the intent of the facilitator. For example, in those cases where coalitions have formed, the type of influence exercised outside of a meeting may better be characterized as persuasion than mediation if it focuses exclusively upon changing only one coalition's position. In other words, if facilitators attempt to reconcile two or more positions upon an issue, then they are mediating; conversely, if facilitators try to effect changes upon only one coalition's position, then they are persuading. This integrative approach seems the most useful since it also provides a way to view decision making as a negotiative process.

Decision Making as Negotiation

The model of facilitation so far elaborated is somewhat incomplete because, for analytical purposes, the social actions used to describe various interventions have been treated as discrete processes. This atomized view is only slightly embellished by considering the varying purposes of and contexts for persuasive and mediative interventions. To

further complement the model of facilitation, decision making must be perceived as a negotiative as well as a dialogical process. Two types of exigencies best illustrate decision making as negotiation.

(1) Whenever a committee is attempting to reach a consensual decision, it will necessarily employ what it believes are communicative actions. The facilitator can help this dialogical process along by ensuring that various exigencies (e.g., see the internal-direct interventions mentioned in Table 2) do not sidetrack this intent. Sometimes, however, the committee will engage in unconscious self-deception--systematically distorted communication--while making a decision. This disruption of the dialogical process of consensual decision making cannot, by definition, be facilitated solely by communicative actions. In such a case, the facilitator alone believes that the committee is acting irrationally (or, perhaps, arrives at this diagnosis after a decision has been made already). To intervene, the facilitator must recognize the double-bind inherent in the situation--only a radical reframing of the context will succeed in changing the committee's actions. Such reframing during an actual meeting will require the facilitator to manipulate the committee by acting in such a way that his or her true intent is masked during the meeting (otherwise, of course, the intervention will be rejected).

However, the manipulation occuring during the meeting may not adequately reframe the committee's self-understanding of its decision making. Follow up actions after the initial intervention may be necessary to help coalitions to see the deceit of their actions during the prior meeting. Using various forms of communicative actions, the facilitator mediates the submerged conflicts of interest which systematically dis-

tort the committee's understanding of its own actions. And, of course, the committee must again decide the issue if the intervention is to succeed. Clearly, this therapeutic intervention "negotiates" the committee's decision via (a) either disrupting decision making or reopening the decision process, (b) showing different stakeholders within the committee how their interests are not being harmonized by the committee's actions, and (c) seeking to harmonize their interests in the future.

(2) Although the therapeutic intervention portrays the facilitator as playing a major role in negotiating a decision, many times the power structure within in labor-management program and/or its host organization is the impetus for negotiation. For example, if a worksite committee wishes to discuss alternative work schedules, it seldom can make any implemental decisions without at least consulting the manager of the worksite. Such "consultation" may quickly lead to the committee making a proposal which it then negotiates with the manager. In essense, the committee does not make a decision but, rather, a series of decisions which take into account the veto power and preferences of the manager.

This simple example illustrates a process which is often more intricate in practice. The worksite manager seldom has complete autonomy, and other stakeholders--such as a labor union, a particular division within the organization, or a faction within the committee's constituency--will certainly attempt to influence the committee's decision making. Under such circumstances, the facilitator may perform a variety of roles, from liaison to mediator to persuader. As a liaison, the facilitator can convey information to and from the committee, presenting the committee's proposal to stakeholders and feeding their preferences back to the committee. If the conflicting interests of stakeholders

cannot be satisfied by the committee's decision, the facilitator may attempt to mediate the positions of the stakeholders vis-a-vis the committee. And, of course, the facilitator may attempt to persuade one or another stakeholder to accept the position of the committee (or vice versa). Seldom are these roles of the facilitator well-defined, and facilitators will often find themselves performing an unique blend of roles within a specific worksite committee.

In summary, the worksite committee's decision making is influenced by negotiative relationships with various stakeholders: (1) coalitions within the committee, (2) factions within the worksite constituency, (3) factions within the external labor-management program, (4) factions within the host organization, and (5) factions within the labor union. These negotiative relationships are illustrated in Figure 3.

--Insert Figure 3 about here--

Directives for and Examples of Facilitating Consensual Decision Making

The model of facilitation presented in the preceding section has several implications for practitioners. By formulating some of these implications as directives and exemplifying cases where these directives were followed (or ignored), I hope the practitioner may better facilitate labor-management decision making. To exemplify the directives, I have drawn from two cases of labor-management decision making (see Savage, 1985b) that I have previously analyzed. These two cases examine the decision-making that occurred in two Quality of Working Life (QWL) worksite committees, the DR committee and the O committee. Each committee still exists as part of a QWL program supported by a large midwestern city and a labor union local. I served as a third-party facilitator for the program, and the DR and O committees were two of the

five worksite committees that I visited on a regular basis (either bi-weekly or monthly).

The QWL program parallels but inverts the structure of the city (see Figure 1, p. 1). The worksite committees are empowered to make decisions that directly effect their working conditions, but they cannot violate city-, departmental-, or division-wide rules. However, a worksite committee can suggest experiments to the higher level QWL committees so that changes in rules can be implemented on a trial basis.

Worksite committees consist of both fixed (for key management and union roles) and elected positions (for supervisory and non-supervisory employees). Generally, the worksite manager and assistant manager have fixed positions, as do the union steward and a designated union assistant. The elected positions are more variable in nature. Each committee sets up guidelines for elections and determines what form of representation of the workforce should occur in the committee.

Directives for Facilitating Internal Processes

(1) As simple as it may sound, the committee should **avoid multiple, simultaneous conversations.** Although the role of regulating the committee's conversation usually falls in the hands of the chair of the committee, the facilitator must ensure that the committee's focus remains undivided. Such controlling actions remind the committee of the rules of procedure underlying the discussion; hence, these actions are oriented to reaching an understanding.

If multiple conversations are allowed to continue, the committee's consensus may be distorted. For example, during a meeting of the December 1981 DR committee which focused on flextime, I suggested that the committee table flextime discussion until more information was

gathered about the workforce's interest in flextime. Immediately after I made this suggestion, VRG (the union steward) and BIL (an employee) began arguing over who held the chair position on the flextime subcommittee (neither one seem to desire the position since a survey of employee opinion would be the subcommittee's responsibility). While they were arguing, ALF (the manager) addressed the rest of the committee, questioning the practicability of a flextime program and concluding that the flextime discussion should be tabled until another worksite committee implemented a flextime schedule. Near the end of the meeting, the committee unanimously agreed to table discussion of flextime; as I learned at the next meeting, however, neither ALF nor VRG and BIL recognized that they agreed to table flextime discussion for different reasons.

(2) A well accepted activity of the facilitator is to **clarify frames of reference** by engaging participants in a dialectical dialogue. Many misunderstandings are caused by people thinking they are talking either (a) about the same thing, when in fact they are discussing different things, or (b) about different things, when in fact they are conversing about the same thing. Although this seems to be a simple form of intervention, it is often difficult to detect discrepant frames of reference until a misunderstanding does arise, especially if participants interrupt each other.

For example, during the same DR committee meeting mentioned previously, VRG and DIK (chair of the committee and VRG's immediate supervisor) argued about the virtues of various types of flextime schedules. The transcript of their conversation indicates that they both agreed that flextime schedules in which employees did not have to notify the

supervisor of their starting times were not practicable at the DR worksite. VRG and DIK, however, did not mutually recognize this agreement because they continually overlapped their talk--simply put, they did not listen to each other. As the facilitator, I should have intervened by summarizing their positions and asking if they agreed with my summaries; I did not do this because it seemed apparent from the content of what they said that they were in agreement. This oversight suggests that facilitators should **assess both the illocutionary force (what is done) and the content (what is said)** in order to clarify frames of reference.

(3) Perhaps the most important intervention that a facilitator can perform is to prevent premature closure of discussion. In short, the facilitator should **rephrase decision proposals and test for consensus.** This discourse should occur not only when a proposal is being considered positively, but also whenever a proposal is being discussed negatively by the committee.

The December DR committee meeting again provides an example of the consequences of failing to intervene in this manner. Following DIK and VRG's exchange, BIL made a number of concrete suggestions regarding how flextime could be implemented. Even though DIK and VRG responded positively to his proposals, BIL's suggestions were ultimately discarded following ALF's remark that flextime was not working out at another worksite. I intervened at that point by suggesting that the committee assess the employee desire for flextime. Although this intervention was innocuous per se, it served to undermine the support that had been expressed for BIL's suggestions and to support ALF's negative implications. This same intervention might have been more effective if I had prefaced it (a) with a summary of BIL's ideas, (b) asked BIL to validate

my summary, and (c) asked the committee for an expression of support for or opposition to these "redefined" ideas. A dialectical intervention of that sort would possibly have kept BIL's ideas salient within the committee, furthering the concrete, positive examination of flextime by the committee.

(4) Facilitating communicative action by intervening after and before meetings usually is a two step process: (a) **clarify the positions of each party in dispute** and (b) **explore different approaches that may mediate the dispute.** Often individuals or coalitions within a committee will oppose an issue without clearly articulating the basis for their opposition during a meeting. To reduce antagonism, the facilitator should approach each party separately after the meeting in order to clarify the positions on the issue. These encounters require the facilitator to engage in a dialectical dialogue, similar to the action used to clarify frames of reference. If the disputing parties appear to be fairly close in their positions, the facilitator may meet directly with both parties in order to establish a common ground before the next committee meeting. Often, however, the parties are far apart in their views, and the facilitator may need to meet a number of times with each party separately, laying the ground rules for future committee discussions of the issue. Here, the facilitator engages in actions oriented to reaching an understanding. Such actions may be particularly needed when instrumental, issue-oriented conflicts have begun to produce expressive or procedural conflicts (or vice versa).

For example, during both the August and September 1981 meetings of the DR committee, RPH and AkP (supervisors) heatedly objected to considering flextime at the worksite. VRG and DEN (union representatives)

countered these objections in an equally emotional fashion. To restore some calm to the committee, I suggested that the focus of the dispute--a flextime schedule in use at the MR worksite--should be examined more carefully by the committtee. As a result, the DR committee asked the MR committee to discuss its flextime schedule. Although the MR committee refused to send a delegation to discuss flextime, it did invite the DR committee to visit the MR worksite to collect information about the flextime schedule.

During the October meeting, a four-member task force consisting of BIL, DIK, RPH, and VRG was appointed to visit the MR plant, and I was asked to accompany the task force as a "neutral" observer. After this meeting, I met separately with BIL and VRG in order to gather their views on flextime. They expressed the opinion that (a) the MR flextime schedule was practicable and (b) RPH and ARP were opposed to flextime because of past abuses at the MR worksite that no longer occurred. I also met with DIK about two weeks after the committee meeting to obtain his view of flextime. Surprisingly, DIK was fairly supportive of the idea, but he felt the flextime schedule practiced at the MR worksite would not succeed at the DR worksite. Moreover, he thought that any practicable schedule should be adopted on a work crew basis, according to the desires of the supervisor and his crew. Also, he added, the supervisor should have the right to abolish flextime if he felt it was not working out.

Because of construction work needing their attention, DIK and RPH were not able to accompany VRG and BIL during a planned visit of the MR worksite. BIL and VRG interviewed about 15 of the 20 people affected by the flextime schedule during this visit and gathered a very favorable

picture of its operation. In order to "balance" VRG and BIL's survey results, DIK and RPH arranged another visit to the MR worksite.

As supervisors, DIK and RPH were particularly interested in how the upper management felt the MR flextime schedule was working, so they met with only the three top-ranking supervisory personnel. RPH made it very clear that he felt the crew he had worked fine, and he did not want to "fix it" if "it was not broken." This approach led to the disclosure that the present flextime schedule did create some problems; for example, since most employees opted to come in early, only "skeleton" crews worked in the late afternoon. After this meeting, I spoke with both RPH and DIK about the feasibility of flextime at the DR worksite. RPH stated that he would not participate in any type of flextime schedule, but that if a practicable schedule--one in which supervisors would know a week ahead of time when employees would be starting work--could be introduced, he would not oppose its implementation.

The task force results were reported during the December committee meeting. As previously discussed, this meeting led to a fairly open and calm discussion of flextime, albeit a discussion that resulted in the tabling of flextime. Such a discussion would not have been possible without the clarification of positions and discussion of different possibilities that occurred outside of the committee meetings.

Directives for Facilitating External Processes

The previous example illustrates the thin conceptual line between internal and external processes. My facilitative efforts concentrated on mediating the DR committee's conflict over flextime, yet these efforts led to the involvement of the MR worksite. Insofar, however, as the MR committee and the personnel at the MR worksite did not overtly

influence the DR committee's decision making, it seems clear that the external process of negotiating a decision did not come into play.

Such negotiative processes usually do come into play whenever a committee seeks input from its constituency and/or approval from the host organization through the labor-management program.

Facilitating committee/constituent communication involves a number of steps: (a) **identify the interests of different stakeholders**, (b) **explore differences and similarities among these interests**, and (c) **seek an overarching interest that harmonizes these multiple interests.** Each committee member represents a set of constituents with certain needs and desires. Only if the member knows the interests of his or her constituents, can that member truly make informed decisions within the committee. Moreover, the committee's very survival may hinge on constituents believing that the committee makes a difference. Providing and gathering feedback are thus important activities of members on the committee. These activities can often be facilitated--both within the committee and within the constituency.

Beyond facilitating information flow, the facilitator may help the committee establish more formal links with its constituency via subcommittees and task forces. These subunits assure the committee of firmer and more reliable links with its constituency. Yet, formal mechanisms for expressing and channeling the interests of its constituency do not, <u>per se</u>, ensure that a committee will further those interests. Only if the committee seeks an overarching interest that harmonizes seemingly competing interests will the committee's constituency be fairly represented. Many of the techniques already discussed may be needed to effect such an overarching interest.

The O committee--which used brainstorming, employee surveys, subcommittee reports, and a consultant's feasibility study to decide upon a flextime schedule--exemplifies how the external-inward processes of decision making may be facilitated. During the latter half of 1978, the O committee--under the guidance of ART (a facilitator)--conducted a number of brainstorming sessions to identify issues of importance. Among those issues identified were tardiness, flextime, and crosstraining. To gather more information on the flextime issue, ART encouraged the O committee to contact the MR committee which was working on a flextime experiment proposal at that time. This contact provided the impetus for the O committee to survey its hourly workforce constituency about flextime during June 1979. Hence, ART's interventions helped the committee better realize its own interests.

The survey results showed that a majority of the hourly workforce favored some form of flextime, and to address this interest, the O committee formed a subcommittee to investigate the feasibility of flextime. The subcommittee, though favorably disposed toward flextime, did not produce any concrete proposals. Its recommendation, accepted by the O committee in early August, was to have a third-party perform an extensive feasibility study.

A new facilitator, JIM, agreed to take on the third-party role in April 1980. JIM met with many of the committee members to gather their input before presenting a proposal for the feasibility study in May. As one of his preliminary recommendations, JIM suggested that the committee create a new subcommittee on flextime. This subcommittee was formed in June after JIM presented the results of the feasibility study. The subcommittee--with JIM's guidance--again surveyed the O workforce during

July and August. This second survey, moreover, included not only hourly employees but also salaried supervisors. The results of the survey showed that most supervisors and most employees favored a flextime schedule with a core time from 9 AM to 3 PM. Certainly, JIM's interventions not only helped the committee better understand its constituency's interests, but also provided the committee with a means to focus those interests upon a common goal.

Because of the positive feedback from the workforce, the O committee charged the flextime subcommittee with drafting plans to implement flextime. JIM again lent his expertise to this effort. The draft plan was presented to the committee in late November; one major objection surfaced from supervisors regarding the supervision of employees during non-core times. Rather than having the schedule of the supervisor determined through the formula specified by the subcommittee, the supervisors insisted that management should retain this prerogative. This change was accepted at the next meeting in December. At the following meeting later in December 1980, another change was also made: participation of a work unit in the flextime schedule would be at the discretion of the supervisor. Even though this essentially unchanged version of the flextime schedule was not implemented until May 1982, the committee--with JIM's help--had recognized and had begun to acheive an overarching interest of its constituency.

Summary

Although facilitators may spend much of their time in meetings, interventions also often occur either before or after meetings. These acts of facilitating may include both persuasion and mediation. During interventions, facilitators may engage in communicative or strategic

actions, depending upon the exigencies they encounter. Strategic actions may help if the committee enters into negotiative relationships with organizational or labor union stakeholders; such actions may also be necessary if the committee engages in systematically distorted communication.

Communicative actions may help both the internal and external decision making processes of a committee. To help the internal process, the facilitator should follow a number of directives: (1) avoid multiple, simultaneous conversations; (2) clarify frames of reference; (3) rephrase decision proposals and test for consensus; and (4) clarify the positions of each party in dispute, and explore different approaches that may mediate the dispute. The external process of decision making may be facilitated by adhering to the following directives: (1) identify the interests of different stakeholders, (2) explore differences and similarities among these interests, and (3) seek an overarching interest that harmonizes these multiple interests.

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Table 1
A Descriptive Framework for Examining the Process of Facilitating: Two Classes and Four Types of Interventions

Class	Type	Focus	Mode	Occasion
Internal	Direct	Committee	Persuasion/ Mediation	During meetings
_____	Indirect	Coalitions	Persuasion/ Mediation	After/before meetings
_____	_____	Individuals	Counseling/ Persuasion	_____
External	Inward	Committee/ Constituents	Persuasion/ Mediation	During/after/ before meetings
_____	Outward	Committee/ Program/ Organization	Persuasion/ Mediation	After/before meetings

Table 2
A Contingency Model of Facilitation: Communicative and Strategic Actions as Modes of Intervention

Class	Type	Focus	Mode	Exigency	Action	Occasion
Internal	Direct	Committee	Persuasion	Premature foreclosure of discussion	Dialectical dialogue	During meetings
____	____	____	____	Confusion over terms/ frames of reference	Dialectical dialogue	____
____	____	____	____	Multiple conversations; disruptions	Action oriented to reaching an understanding	____
____	____	____	Mediation	Instrumental conflict	Dialectical dialogue	____
____	____	____	____	Procedural or expressive conflict	Action oriented to reaching an understanding	____
____	____	____	____	Systematically distorted communication	Manipulation	____
____	Indirect	Coalitions	Persuasion	Competitive frame of reference	Dialectical dialogue	After/before meetings

Table 2 (continued)
A Contingency Model of Facilitation: Communicative and Strategic Actions as Modes of Intervention

Class	Type	Focus	Mode	Exigency	Action	Occasion
Internal	Indirect	Coalitions	Mediation	Unresolved conflicts/ systematically distorted communication	Dialectical dialogue/ action oriented to reaching an understanding	____
____	____	Individuals	Counseling	Problematic communicator style	Dialogue/ dialectical dialogue	After/before meetings
____	____	____	Persuasion	Expressive conflict/ competitive frame of reference	Dialectical dialogue/ action oriented to reaching an understanding	____
External	Inward	Committee/ Constituents	____	Unknown or conflicting frames of reference	Dialectical dialogue	____
____	____	____	Mediation	Instrumental conflict	Dialectical dialogue	During meetings
____	____	____	____	Procedural or expressive conflict	Action oriented to reaching an understanding	____

Table 2 (continued)
A Contingency Model of Facilitation: Communicative and Strategic Actions as Modes of Intervention

Class	Type	Focus	Mode	Exigency	Action	Occasion
External	Inward	____	____	Unresolved conflicts/ systematically distorted communication	Dialectical dialogue/ action oriented to reaching an understanding	After/before meetings
____	Outward	Committee/ Program/ Organization	Persuasion	Stalling & other delays	Open strategic action	____
____	____	Committee/ Program/ Organization	Mediation	Instrumental/ procedural/ expressive conflict	Dialectical dialogue/ action oriented to reaching an understanding	After/before meetings
____	____	____	____	Negotiation and bargaining about proposed changes	Action oriented to reaching an understanding/ open strategic action	____

Table 3
Classes and Types of Intervention by Social Action and Mode

	Persuasion	Mediation
Dialectical Dialogue	Internal-direct Internal-indirect External-inward	Internal-direct Internal-indirect External-inward External-outward
Action Oriented to Reaching an Understanding	Internal-direct Internal-indirect	Internal-direct Internal-indirect External-inward External-outward
Open Strategic Action	External-outward	External-outward
Manipulation	Internal-direct	

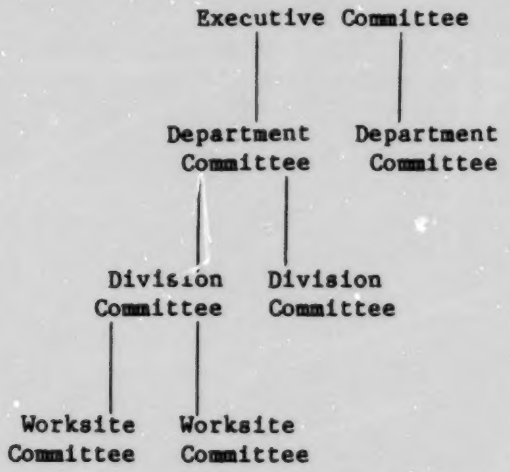

Figure 1. Idealized Cooperative Labor-Management Program Structure

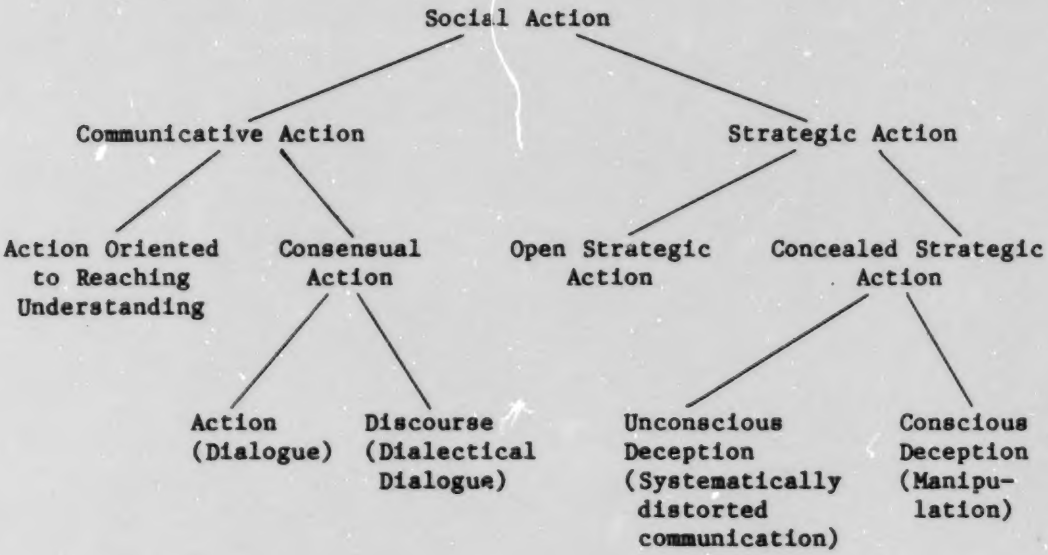

Figure 2. A Typology of Different Forms of Social Action

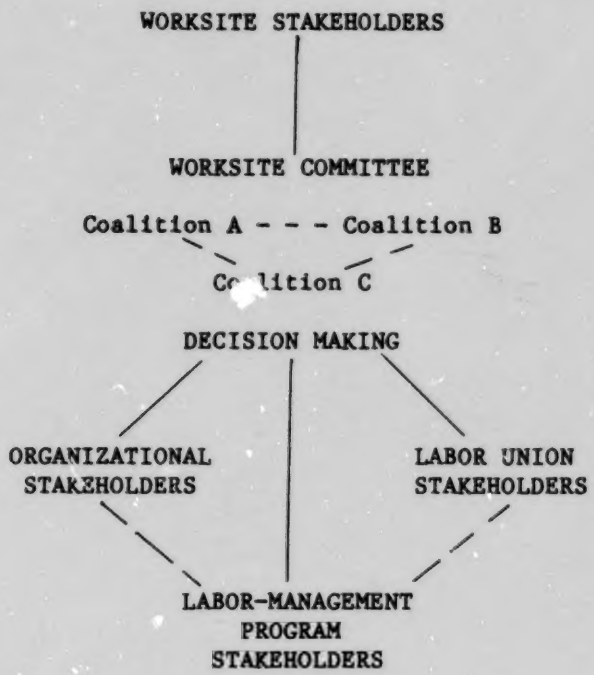

Figure 3. Worksite Committee Decision Making: Negotiative Relationships